



**Connecticut Department of Public Health**

**Testimony Presented Before the Public Health Committee**

**February 24, 2016**

**Commissioner Raul Pino, M.D., M.P.H.  
860-509-7101**

**House Bill # 5211 An Act Concerning Certificates of Need**

The Department of Public Health (DPH) provides the following information in regards to House Bill #5211. The proposed language in Section 2 will require certificate of need authorization for any reduction of specialty services offered by a hospital. The proposed language in Section 1 defines the reduction as a fifty per cent or greater decrease of direct care staff hours. Currently, hospitals are not required to file staffing hours with the Office of Health Care Access (OHCA). As a result, OHCA would be unable to verify any staffing hours represented in a certificate of need application. Further, it is difficult to quantify and verify a reduction in services. The level of staffing hours may not be an appropriate indicator of a reduction in services due to a possible change in patient mix within a certain unit. The Department would welcome further discussion with members of the Public Health Committee to listen to their thoughts and determine whether legislation is needed to accomplish the goals of this legislation.

The proposed language in Section 3 adds an additional certificate of need criteria requiring OHCA to consider community needs assessments when reviewing applications. OHCA already considers community needs assessments when analyzing certificate of need applications.

The proposed language in Section 4 requires OHCA to hold a public hearing on a certificate of need application in the affected community if any individual requests that a hearing be held. This has the potential to increase the number of public hearings exponentially, thereby leading to the need for increased staffing resources and travel that the Department is unable to accomplish within existing resources. As Governor Malloy stated in his 2016 State of the State Address, we must reset our expectations of what we can afford in light of the new economic reality facing Connecticut. Because an unbudgeted fiscal impact would result from having to conduct many more public hearings, the Department cannot support this proposal.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's view of this proposal.